



MISIONI I PËRHERSHËM
I REPUBLIKËS SË SHQIPËRISË
PRANË OKB-SË
NJU JORK

PERMANENT MISSION
OF THE REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS
NEW YORK

STATEMENT BY

H.E. MS. BESIANA KADARE

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative of the Republic of Albania
to the United Nations

at the

High-level United Nations Conference to Support the
Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve
and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for
sustainable development

New York, 8 June 2017

- *Check against delivery* -

Honorable Co-Presidents,
Mr. President of the General Assembly,
Mr. Secretary General of the United Nations,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,

At the outset, I would like to commend the governments of Sweden and Fiji for co-hosting this unique conference, which gathers decision-makers, scientists and civil society in an effort to establish a more sustainable and respectful relationship between humankind and Oceans. I also extend my sincere congratulations to the President of the 71st Session, H.E. Mr. Thomson for his endeavors in soliciting a universal push to transform our world through the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

This Conference is a turning point in creating the momentum to mobilize all our efforts to restore oceans' natural environment and ecosystem. It marks a great opportunity to advance the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goal 14, and strengthen the international cooperation in order to sustainably manage and protect our planet's blue heart: the oceans. Indeed, they provide us with oxygen, regulate our climate, are directly connected to our health, and constitute the primary source of food for more than 3,5 billion people. Yet our actions are increasingly putting it to danger, although its decline would negatively impact the lives of millions of people.

Moreover, Oceans are not only home to more than 90% of the Earth's living habitat. They are also home to a large part of humankind cultural heritage, identity and history. We need to be more aware of this hidden treasure and constantly protect it and promote it. There are more artifacts and remnants of history in the ocean than in all of the world's museums,

combined. I would like to take this opportunity to appeal to all UN Member States to ratify UNESCO's Convention on the protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Albania is a country with 362 kilometers of coastline, which represent one third of our borders, and 1,350 square kilometers of waters. In this context, the management and conservation of the oceans and seas are of paramount importance to us, both as a source of life and as key in achieving sustainable development.

As a party to the Convention of Biological Diversity, Albania is working towards the protection of the marine environment and the efficient management of marine resources. We have prepared a National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan, in line with the Aichi global targets to 2020 and the strategic plan of the Convention. In this spirit, Albania has also adopted the Integrated Cross-Sectorial Plan for the Coastal Zones, and has elaborated the strategic document for the Marine and Coastal Protected Areas. Furthermore, Albania has endorsed the increase of Marine Protected Areas, as stated in the Aichi target 11.

Our national priorities for contributing to the sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources are focused on three main areas:

1. Conservation of the marine environment and monitoring of marine and protected species;
2. Promotion of sustainable, innovative, responsible and quality tourism in marine protected areas, while taking climate-change mitigation and adaptation measures;

3. Developing of the Maritime Spatial Planning, in close partnership with our neighbors in the region and in line with the criteria for membership in the European Union.

At the same time, Albania has adhered to the agreement on Port State measures to prevent, curb and eliminate unlawful, unreported and unregulated fishing. We have drafted multi-annual fisheries management plans for small pelagic and demersal fisheries, within the framework of the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean.

Dear colleagues,

In September 2015, all countries unanimously adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and we all committed ourselves to implementing it. Now, it's time for concrete, effective Action! Albania is deeply committed to protect and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources, and stands ready to play its role in the region in order to reverse the decline in the health of our oceans.

Thank you.